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ABSTRACT

This 4-week curriculum is designed to help 11th and 12th grade students reach an understanding of the history and culture of Vietnam and the roots of U.S. military involvement there, and also to draw lessons from U.S. actions during the war in Vietnam. Students are encouraged to engage in critical thinking, evaluation, drawing conclusions, taking positions on political and social issues, and hopefully becoming more interested in international affairs and the further study of other cultures. Class activities include role playing, class and group discussions, report writing, library readings and research, talks by quest speakers, and video presentations. A unit syllabus and examinations are included along with lists of concepts, goals, and objectives, student handouts, and an extensive bibliography of resource materials. (DB)

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ED328492

The Vietnam War:
A Four Week Instructional Unit

grades 11-12

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by Darrell Meadows

Educ 385/Turner/Instructional Unit
University of Missouri-St. Louis
November 1990

SO 021 119

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The Vietnam War: A Four Week Instructional Unit

by Darrell Meadows

Introduction

Students today are increasingly far removed from the events of the Vietnam War era. Much of what they know only comes from what they see on television or in movies about Vietnam. Through this manner of obtaining information about the war and about Vietnamese culture, their picture of Vietnam and the war is less than objective and quite distorted. Teaching students about Vietnam is a must for today's curriculum. Most importantly, students need to reach a better understanding of the history and culture of Vietnam, as well as the roots of U.S. involvement, if they are ever to be able to draw lessons from the war.

The 1990's will be a decade of great change in the world. Indeed, the role of the United States in international affairs is likely to be re-defined. This unit on Vietnam seeks to help students at the senior high school level interpret U.S. actions not only during the Vietnam era, but today and beyond. To some degree, it seeks to help students make correlations and come to understand how recent U.S. policy has affected Central America and the Middle East.

In the process of studying the Vietnam War, students will be engaged in critical thinking, evaluation, drawing conclusions and taking positions on political and social issues. It is hoped that students will become more interested in international affairs and will seek further study of other cultures--for such a generation of citizens will be much needed in the next decade.

Concepts, Goals and Objectives

MAJOR CONCEPTS

1. The geography of Vietnam has had a fundamental impact upon its history and development.

2. Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism were both borrowed and imposed upon

Vietnamese culture, yet their development in Vietnam was quite distinct from China and the bordering countries of Southeast Asia.

3. The Vietnamese have a wealth of literature and poetry from which one can learn a great deal about Vietnam.

4. Vietnamese culture and geography has often been misrepresented in American films about the Vietnam War.

5. Throughout its history, Vietnam has had long periods of time in which it has been invaded and controlled by numerous peoples; at other times, however, the Vietnamese expressed a strong sense of their national identity, fighting for and maintaining their independence.

6. U.S. involvement in Vietnam since the Truman administration has been characterized by a series of decisions and reactions to events which resulted in War and the escalation of War in Vietnam.

7. The Vietnam War was not only a product of the Cold War between the U.S. and the Soviet Union (and China), nor was it just a War about "communist aggression," but also a civil war between the Vietnamese themselves.

8. The Vietnam War era was a time of increased social and political stress in the United States.

9. There were many victims of the war in both the United States and Vietnam, as well as other parts of Southeast Asia.

10. Lessons can be drawn from the Vietnam War which apply to U.S. involvement in Central America and the Middle East.

GOALS

1. That students will learn to think objectively and critically about conflict and its resolution in international relations.

2. To help students learn how to reason ethically about difficult moral choices.

3. To help students better understand people from social backgrounds and cultures different from their own.

4. That students will have a better understanding of the geography of Southeast Asia and

that geography can play a crucial role in shaping history.

5. To review the many aspects of the Vietnam War through a diversity of materials.

6. To increase students' reading comprehension, note taking abilities, and study skills through their study of the Vietnam War.

OBJECTIVES

1. Students will engage in role playing activities, class and group discussions, and write a report in order to foster objective and critical thinking skills, as well as ethical reasoning skills.

2. Students will learn about the history and culture of Vietnam through expository and literary readings, library research, guest speakers, and video presentations.

3. Students will create a map of Vietnam and Southeast Asia, as well as read and take lecture notes about Vietnam's geography and its role in Vietnamese history.

4. Students will learn about the Vietnam War through videotapes, lectures, readings, self-guided research projects, role playing, guest speakers, as well as class and group discussions.

5. Students will complete a study guide which corresponds with the assigned readings; they will be engaged in reflective discussions about the readings.

6. Students will take notes on all lectures and videos in an appropriate manner, as outlined by teacher.

7. Students will prepare for the end of unit exam, rather than "cram," in an appropriate manner to be outlined by the teacher.

BASIC READING MATERIALS

Lessons of the Vietnam War: A Modular Textbook. 1988. Center for Social Studies Education. Units 1,2,9,10 and 12. All other readings to be provided as student handouts.

The Vietnam War
Four Week Unit Syllabus

BASIC TEXT MATERIALS: *The Lessons of the Vietnam War*, Units 1, 2, 9, 10 and 12.

Unless otherwise noted, reading assignments will come from The *Lessons of the Vietnam War* and will be indicated by "RA." Reading assignments should be read prior to the following class session. Students should complete the corresponding study guide section as they read each assignment.

EVALUATION: You will be graded on your classroom participation in all discussions and activities. In addition, your grade during this unit will reflect your having completed all study guide questions as you read the assigned text. You will also complete to the instructors satisfaction one project on Vietnamese culture, a one-page summary of an interview, and a 2-3 page typed report on one aspect of the Vietnam War. There will be an exam consisting of true/false, multiple choice, and essay questions.

GOALS OF THIS UNIT:

1. To increase your ability to think objectively and critically about conflict and its resolution in international relations.

2. To help you learn how to reason ethically about difficult moral choices.

3. To help you to better understand people from social backgrounds and cultures different from your own.

4. That you will have a better understanding of the geography of Southeast Asia and how geography has played a crucial role in shaping history.

5. To review the many aspects of the Vietnam War through a diversity of materials.

6. To increase your reading comprehension, note taking abilities, and study skills through your study of the Vietnam War.

WEEK 1: Introduction to Vietnam: Land, History and Culture

Mon: Slide Presentation: "Goodnight Saigon." *The Wall*, by Eve Bunting. Preliminary Reaction Guide. Class Discussion. Syllabus.

RA = pp. 3-12, unit 1; Vocabulary list. Don't forget to complete your study guide!

Tue: Topic: the Geography of Vietnam. Group Activity: Creating maps of Vietnam and

Southeast Asia. Review and Handout on Note-Taking.

RA = pp. 12-20, unit 1.

Wed: Topic: Cultural Diversity in Vietnam--Confucianism, Buddhism and other influences. Lecture.

RA = pp. 20-29, unit 1; also read the handout on Vietnamese Poetry

Thu: Class and Group Discussions of readings. Group Activity: Drawing meanings from Vietnamese Poetry.

Fri: Video: "Reality vs. Representation," scenes from popular American movies about Vietnam. Group Discussions.

**Weekend Assignment: Project on Vietnamese Culture (see handout)

WEEK 2: America and Vietnam: Decisions and Consequences

Mon: Individual Presentations on Vietnamese Culture. Class Discussion.

RA = pp. 5-13, unit 2.

Tue: Topic: America and the War in Vietnam. Video: "Roots of a War." Class/Group Activity: Role playing the origins of U.S. involvement.

RA = pp. 13-20, unit 2; Handout on the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution.

Wed: Topic: The Tonkin Gulf Resolution. Group activity.

RA = pp. 20-28, unit 2.

Thu: Discussion of readings. Video: *Hearts and Minds*, pt. 1.

Remember to write down your thoughts and reactions to the film!
Read handout: Preparing for the end of unit exam.

Fri: Video: *Hearts and Minds*, pt. 2. Class Discussion.

RA = pp. 3-12, unit 10.

Interview Assignment: Before next Friday, you are to interview someone who was at least 15 years old during the Vietnam War (one of your parents, an Aunt

or an Uncle or another close relative, for example). See handout for question suggestions. Write a one-page summery of your findings. This assignment will be due in one week.

WEEK 3: The Wounds of War: in America and Vietnam

Mon: Topic: Literature about Vietnam. Poem: "Song of Napalm," by Bruce Weigl. Dialogue: "Sticks and Stones," by Davis Rabe (pp. 24-29, unit 9).

RA = pp. 12-21, unit 10.

Tue: In Class Group Activity: Illustrating the wounds of war. Instructions will be given in class.

RA = pp. 21-28, unit 10.

Wed: Library Activity: Begin researching a topic related to the Vietnam War and write a 2-3 page typed report. See hand-out for several suggestions. Students may discuss other ideas for related topics with the instructor. This assignment will be due next Monday.

Work on your report!

Thu: Guest Speaker: Vietnam Veteran will discuss his/her experiences of and opinions about the war and America's involvement in Vietnam. Be sure to have your questions ready!

Work on your report! Review your class notes!

Fri: Interviews due. Discussion of readings and reflections on yesterday's guest speaker. Video: "Legacies." (Take Notes!)

RA = pp. 3-9, unit 12.

Remember: reports are due Monday!

WEEK 4: The Vietnam War: Lessons from Yesterday for Today

Mon: Reports due. Group Debates: Covert Wars (pp. 17-19, unit 12).

RA = pp. 12-16 and 20-21, unit 12.

Tue: Guest Speaker: Social Worker will discuss problems of the Boat People,

Vietnamese refugees, and the current problems facing Vietnam. Be sure to have your questions ready!

Wed: Discussion of readings and reflections on yesterday's guest speaker. Final reaction guide. Review for exam on Vietnam.

Thu: Examination over content presented in the Vietnam War unit. Bring Pencils!

Fri: Field Trip: The St. Louis Art Museum. Topic: The art of Buddhism in East Asia.

The Vietnam War
Unit Exam

Before you begin this exam, remember the guidelines you learned for how to take an exam effectively. Be sure to read each question carefully.

TRUE/FALSE--Mark a "T" of "F" in the space provided before each of the following statements.

1. ____ Dien Bien Phu is the capital of Vietnam.

2. ____ The shape of Vietnam is like the letter "S."

3. ____ The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution has been called President Johnson's "Blank Check."

4. ____ The French were defeated at Dien Bien Phu.

5. ____ Vietnam was dominated by China in many ways for about 1,000 years.

6. ____ Diplomacy is the art of conducting negotiations and agreements among nations.

7. ____ Ngo Dinh Diem was the leader of South Vietnam when JFK became President.

8. ____ Buddhism spread across most of East Asia and originated in Japan.

9. ____ Ho Chi Minh City used to be called Saigon.

10. ____ The TET offensive brought a major victory for U.S. forces in Vietnam.

MULTIPLE CHOICE--Place the letter of the best answer in the blank provided.

1. ____ Vietnam: (a) has no coastline (b) is surrounded by water (c) has a short coastline (d) has a long coastline

2. ____ Vietnam is bordered by which of these three countries? (a) China, Laos, Kampuchea (b) Mexico, Guatemala, Peru (c) France, Spain, Germany (d) Thailand, Burma, Laos

3. ____ Vietnam's culture has been most strongly influenced by what Asian nation? (a) Japan (b) Philippines (c) Malaysia (d) China

4. ____ In the 19th Century, Vietnam became a _____ protectorate. (a) Portuguese (b) French (c) American (d) Spanish

5. ____ After World War II, North Vietnam proclaimed itself a _____ and free of France. (a) colony of England (b) Territory of China (c) Democratic Republic (d) part of Indochina

6. ____ Laos, Kampuchea, and Vietnam are often referred to as _____. (a) Indonesia (b) Indochina (c) Polynesia (d) the Ivory Coast

7. ____ The leader of one of the Vietnamese Nationalist groups was (a) Ho Chi Minh (b) Pol Pot (c) Chiang Kai-shek (d) Ferdinand Marcos

8. ____ After World War II the French attempted to re-establish their position in Vietnam by installing their former "puppet emperor" _____, as head of the French established government. (a) Haiphong (b) Bao Dai (c) Mao Tse-tung (d) Ngo Dinh Diem

9. ____ Many of the U.S. decisions about Vietnam were made as a result of _____. (a) Its understanding of Vietnamese history and culture (b) the Cold War (c) its policies toward France after WWII (d) answers b and c only (e) all of the above

10. ____ Among the repercussions of the Vietnam war for the Vietnamese have been (a) an ongoing refugee problem (b) a boost in agricultural production (c) increased poverty (d) ongoing military conflict (e) answers a, c, and d

ESSAY QUESTIONS--Answer one of the three questions below. Use additional paper provided.

1. What was the general, overall foreign policy context of American involvement in Vietnam, i.e., why were we there and why did we stay? What were the "pros" and "cons" of such a policy?

2. What was the impact of Chinese culture in Vietnam historically? How did it affect their government structure? Education? Religious life? Family life?

3. In your reading about the "lessons" of Vietnam, your author made a statement about Vietnam that "what might have remained a local conflict with primarily local implications was elevated into a major international conflict." How does this statement relate to the "lessons" discussed toward the end of this unit?

Instructional Activities and Student Handouts

The remainder of this unit includes a number of the instructional activities--though not all-- and most of the accompanying student handouts needed, if you wish to adhere to the suggested unit syllabus. See the list of Sample Student Handouts and Activities at the beginning of this unit for specific page numbers. Many of the activities can be expanded for those teachers who are teaching a half or a full semester course on the Vietnam War. These activities were in most cases adapted from other sources to fit my somewhat ambitious four-week unit. However, especially for those teaching a longer unit, I have included an expanded bibliography which may be of aid in the development of additional activities.

Summary of Instructional Activities

In order shown in syllabus	CONCEPTS	GOALS
1. Slide presentation (motivational activity)	8,9	3,5
2. Reading: *The Wall*	9	5
3. Preliminary reaction guide		1, 2
4. Unit 1: readings, study guide, discussions	1,2,5	3,4,5,6
5. Group map activity	1	3,4,5
6. Review of note-taking skills		6
7. Lecture: Buddhism & Confucianism	2	3,6
8. Vietnamese poetry: readings, group activity	2,3,5	3,4,5
9. Video & discussion: "Reality vs. Representation	4,6,7,9,10	1,2,3,4,5
10. Project on Vietnamese culture	2,3,5	3,4
11. Unit 2: readings, study guide, discussions	6,7,9,10	1,2,3,5,6
12. Role play: origins of U.S. involvement	6,7,10	1,2,5
13. Group activity: Tonkin Gulf Resolution	6,10	1,2,4,5
14. Video & discussion: *Hearts and Minds*	1,6,7,8,9	1,2,4,5,6
15. Interview assignment	6,8,9,10	1,2,5,6

16. Unit 10: readings, study guide, discussions	6,8,9	1,2,3,5,6
17. 3-level reading guide: literature about Vietnam	6,7,9	1,2,3,5,6
18. Group poster activity: "Wounds of War"	8,9	2,3,5,6
19. Library activity and report	5,6,7,8,9,10	ALL
20. Guest speaker: Vietnam veteran	6,7,8,910	1,2,5,6
21. Video and discussion: "Legacies"	8,9,10	1,2,3,5,6
22. Unit 12: readings, study guide, discussion	8,9,10	1,2,3,5,6
23. Covert Wars: 3-level guide, group debates	6,10	1,2,5,6
24. Guest speaker: social worker	9,10	2,3,5,6
25. Review and examination	ALL	ALL
26. Trip to St. Louis Art Museum: Buddhist art	2,4,5,9	2,3,4,5

Timeline: Traditional Vietnam to 1954

206 B.C.	Kingdom of Nam Viet
111 B.C.	Nam Viet organized into Chines provinces by the Han dynasty
939 A.D.	Establishment of first Vietnamese state independent of China
1075-1077	A national army defends the land of Vietnam against an invasion by the Sung dynasty
1258	First Mongol invasion; the capital is sacked
1285	Second Mongol invasion is driven back
1287-1288	Third Mongol invasion defeated
1407	Ming dynasty armies occupy Vietnam
1428	Expulsion of the Chinese; establishment of the Le dynasty
late 1500's	Portuguese trade routes include Vietnam
1614	Jesuits in Vietnam
1614-1682	Portuguese, French, Dutch rivalry in Southeast Asia, involving Vietnam
1787	Southern Vietnamese (Nguyen) sign a treaty with France; never implemented
1789	Vietnamese victory over Qing (Ch'ing) dynasty forces
1804	Emperor Gia Long names his land Vietnam
1847	French bombardment of Danang
1858	French seize Danang
1859	French capture Saigon
1874	Tu Duc signs Treaty of Saigon, recognizing French sovereignty over all of Cochin China

1884	Treaty of Hue confirms French protectorate over Annam/Tonkin
1897	French Governor-General Paul Doumer's reorganization and centralization of the colony
1904	Phan Boi Chau founds Reformation Society
1908	Uprising in Hanoi; massive anti-tax revolt in Annam
1916	Rebellion in Cochin China and Annam
1925	Phan Boi Chau tried in Hanoi
1930	Major uprisings in Annam/Tonkin
1940	Fall of France to Germany; Japanese landing in Indochina
1945	Japanese coup; return of French
1946	Start of first war of independence
1949	Chinese Communist Party victory in China
1954	Defeat of French at Dien Bien Phu; Geneva Conference

-History

-Geography

-Culture

1. The Country of Vietnam

-Consequences

-War decisions

-Early Involvement

2. U.S. and Vietnam

Our Study of
The Vietnam War

3. Victims of the War

-Vietnamese

-Americans

4. Lessons for today

- Covert Wars

- Central America

Partial Vocabulary list for Vietnam Unit

Many of the terms you will come across in your readings and in class discussions are listed and defined below. Some will be new to you, while others may be more familiar. Become acquainted with the particular definitions given here, as we will adhere to these definitions throughout the unit. Being familiar with these terms will not only help you in understanding the reading, but will help you to become better at critical thinking about the Vietnam War and modern history in general.

Authoritarian: Characterized by absolute obedience to authority, as opposed to individual freedom.

Capitalism: An economic system characterized by freedom of the marketplace in which increasing private and corporate monopolization of production and distribution of goods is sought through increasing accumulation and reinvestment of profits.

Cold War: Conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union and their allies by means of power politics, economic pressures, spy activities, hostile propaganda and occasional violence.

Colonialism: A policy by which a (usually industrial) nation maintains or extends its control over another (usually agricultural) nation.

Colony: Any region politically controlled by a distant country.

Communism: An economic system characterized by the absence of classes and by common ownership of the means of production and subsistence.

Diplomacy: The art and practice of conducting negotiations and agreements among nations.

Imperialism: A policy to establish or retain formal sovereignty over subordinate societies through political, military and/or economic power.

Negotiation: To communicate or confer with another so as to arrive at the settlement of some matter.

Neo-Colonialism: The economic policies by which an industrial power is able to maintain its influence over other nations, areas or groups.

Racism: A doctrine which holds that psychocultural traits are determined by race and that races are decisively different with respect to their needs, expressions, and right to dominate.

Revolution: Any system of ideas/or actions which transforms the existing political, religious or social structures.

Socialism: An economic system in which the working people possess both political power and the means of producing and distributing goods.

Sovereignty: A supreme power, especially over the political life of a nation.

Third World: A designation applied to the less-developed nations (usually in the southern hemisphere) in distinction to the First World of the industrialized western hemisphere countries and the Second World systems of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Totalitarianism: The subordination of all democratic practices to the control of an elite.

Review Exercise

1. For the following groups of words, mark out the words which are least similar to the others.

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
imperialism	negotiation	authoritarian	Third World
colony	diplomacy	totalitarian	colonialism
revolution	treaty	socialism	First World
colonialism	democracy	police state	Cold War

2. For the following groups of words, circle the word that best describes all the others.

(a)	(c)	(d)
diplomacy	capitalism	Cold War
treaties	economic system	power politics
agreements	socialism	spy activities
negotiations	communism	propaganda

The Vietnam War
Preliminary Reaction Guide

Directions: For the next four weeks, you will be reading and studying about the causes and effects of the Vietnam War, as well as reasons given by U.S. officials for involvement in Vietnam. Before we begin our study of that period of U.S. history, it is important to examine your beliefs and opinions about war. For each statement, put a check mark along the continuum to indicate the extent to which you "agree" or "disagree." *This is not a test!*

Strongly agree	Strongly disagree	
_____		1. A nation must protect the property of its people, even if war is necessary.
_____		2. If a country expects to be attacked by a foreign power, it is justified in attacking that power first in its own defense.
_____		3. Only when a nation is invaded does it have the right to go to war.
_____		4. The government of the U.S. must defend American-owned businesses in foreign countries.
_____		5. Even though some Americans may oppose war with another country, once war is declared each person should give the government his or her full support.
_____		6. When two countries are at war, there should be no distinction between the civilian population and the military.
_____		7. There are situations facing a nation where war is the only alternative.
_____		8. A nation has the right to resort to war to obtain the natural resources it lacks and needs for its well-being.
_____		9. When called upon to approve a declaration of war, a Congressman should decide the matter according to the wishes of his or her constituents.
_____		10. During time of war, a person should put his country ahead of his or her personal beliefs.

The Vietnam War
During Reading Study Guide

Unit One: pp. 3-12

Before reading the daily assigned readings, familiarize yourself with the questions which pertain to that day's assignment. While reading, answer the questions. This study guide will help you to focus on your reading and can be used to prepare for class discussions and the end of unit exam. If you need more space for some of your answers, use additional sheets of paper.

Preview the following questions before reading pages 3-12 in unit 1, and then answer the questions while you are reading.

1. What nations and/or geographic features border Vietnam? (p. 3)

2. What two areas of Vietnam are considered the "heartland" of the country? (p. 4)

3. What is the climate of Vietnam? (p. 3)

4. What non-Western country has colonized and occupied Vietnam? (p. 4)

5. For how long was Vietnam a part of China? (p. 4)

6. Describe some of the tenants of Confucianism and how they were put to use in Vietnam. (p. 4)

7. Explain the meaning of the "March to the South." (p. 6)

8. What was the importance of "the village" in Vietnamese society? (p. 7)

9. Why did the Vietnamese not develop a strong sense of participation in the political process? (p. 7)

10. Why did the Vietnamese not develop a strong sense of individualism and freedom of choice? (p. 7)

11. Most of the population of Vietnam is composed of people known as the _____? They make up approximately _____% of the entire population. What groups of people make up the remaining percentage of the population of Vietnam? (p. 8)

12. Briefly describe the religious and geographical divisions among the Vietnamese. (p. 8)

13. The Cao Dai and Hao Hao sects of Buddhism emerged in response to what? (p. 8)

14. Who were the major colonial powers in the Pacific region during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries? (p. 10)

15. What were their primary interests in the area now known as Vietnam and the other Southeast Asia territories? (p. 10)

16. What did France consider it's *mission civilsatrice* in Indochina? (p. 11)

17. What were the positive and negative consequences of French colonial policy? (p. 12)

18. What, if any, of these consequences do you believe the Indochinese people would have considered positive at that time?

19. Considering what you now know about the history and culture of Vietnam, what false assumptions, if any, do you think French (and later U.S.) officials might have made about the people Vietnam?

Preview of Vietnam War Readings[1]
Cloze Procedure
Teacher's Copy

[*Read the following selection about Vietnam and fill in each blank space with the word that best fits into the context of the selection.*]

Although the history of any region is the product of a complex mix of culture and circumstance, in many ways, for Vietnam, geography is destiny. To understand Vietnam's history it is imperative to have a clear picture of the land and region.

Vietnam's geographical position relative to China has been paramount in shaping its political and cultural history. On the map, Vietnam is directly below China--an elongated, 1,000-mile-long "S," containing in its northern loop the great population center of the Red River delta and in its southern loop that of the Mekong River delta. Vietnam attained this shape through slow, painful expansion from its northern delta (settled before the Christian era), the Mekong region. This expansion took place mainly between the 10th and 18th centuries A.D.

...The formative process of Vietnam's history culminated in the settlement of the Mekong River delta. In the course of the 19th and 20th centuries, this area, dominated by the major city of Saigon, rapidly became the rice bowl for all Vietnam. The delta became the second great population center, and Vietnam took the shape it has today.

---

[1] Excerpt taken from *Vietnam: A Teacher's Guide.* The Asia Society. Fall 1983: p. 3.

Preview of Vietnam War Readings

Read the following selection about Vietnam and fill in each blank space with the word that best fits into the context of the selection.

Although the history of any region is the product _____ a complex mix of culture and circumstance, in many _____, for Vietnam, geography is destiny. To understand Vietnam's history _____ is imperative to have a clear picture of the _____ and region.

Vietnam's geographical position relative to China has been paramount _____ shaping its political and cultural history. On the map, _____ is directly below China--an elongated, 1,000-mile-long "S," containing _____ its northern loop the great population center of the _____ River delta and in its southern loop that of _____ Mekong River delta. Vietnam attained this shape through slow, _____ expansion from its northern delta (settled before the Christian _____), the Mekong region. This expansion took place mainly _____ the 10th and 18th centuries A.D.

...The formative process _____ Vietnam's history culminated in the settlement of the Mekong _____ delta. In the course of the 19th and 20th _____, this area, dominated by the major city of Saigon, _____ became the rice bowl for all Vietnam. The delta _____ the second great population center, and Vietnam took the _____ it has today.

Semantic Map: Confucianism

China Confucius

Confucianism

Family structure | Government | Education

Partrileneal | "Mandate of Heaven" | Examinations

The Spread of Buddhism to Vietnam

India Shakyamuni

Buddhism

Theravada | Mayahana

S.E. Asia | China

Southern Vietnam | Vietnam (North and South)

The Poetry of Vietnam[2]

In learning about another culture, poetry can offer a wealth of knowledge and subtlety not found in most history texts. This is equally true of Vietnam. Think about what you already know of the culture and history of Vietnam as you read the following selections of poems. Also, try to put yourself in the place of the author of each poem--What is he or she trying to say? What are the feelings expressed? How can you relate these poems to a better understanding of Vietnamese culture? to the Vietnam War itself?

Reply to a Northerner who asked about Annam's Customs
by Ho Quy Ly

You asked about things of Annam.
The Quiet South boasts polished ways.
Our king and subjects heed Han laws.
Our caps and gowns obey T'ang rules.
Jade bottles brim with fresh-brewed wine.
Gold knives carve up delicious fish.
Each year, for two or three full months,
spring gardens burst with peach and plum.

Birth and old age, disease and death
by Dieu Nhan

Birth and old age, disease and death--
that's nature's norm since time began.
You want release and cast off bonds:
you only get more tightly bound.
Seek Buddha as you live in sleep.
Seek Dhyana when you grope the dark.
Buddha and Dhyana--if you seek them not,
stop speaking for you're wasting words.

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[2] These poems are from Huynh Sanh Thong, ed. and trans. *The Heritage of Vietnamese Poetry*. 1979. New Haven: Yale UP.

On reading the Buddha's scriptures
by Nguyen Binh Kheim

The Buddha taught the Perfect Thusness Way.
O blessings countless as the Ganges sands!
The sun and moon whirl past and then come back.
All plants and blossoms thrive to wither soon.
The richest man will never have enough.
A pauper feels his lot's the worst on earth.
Within the heart there lies a fallow field:
uproot its weeds and grow true wisdom's flowers.

The people are like water
by Nguyen Mong Tuan

Fickle, the people's love may stay or leave.
In truth, like water, it will rise and fall.
They gather and disperse--tides flow and ebb.
They yield or balk--streams run this way or that.
When they left Ch'in, how could the surge be stopped?
As they joined Han, the torrent rushed unchecked.
O kings, while safe on shore, beware the deep.
Remember--you may cross the sea again.

No thank you
by Tran Te Xuong

My wife, you claim that French is mere child's play.
You'll give me money, pack me off to school.
No, thank you, thank you with *cinquante* bows!
There's no lead pencil in my forebear's graves.

Looking far ahead
by Tran Te Xuong

Through five night watches I've stayed wide awake.
I'm looking far ahead--I feel a jolt.
To ancient wisdom people have gone blind.
The human race may vanish, all wiped out.
Hills, dug for wealth, will someday crumble down.
Seas, opened up for trade, in time will tilt.
The earth, once hollowed out, will fade away.
Folks say a comet's started whirling round.

The Poetry of Vietnam
Reading Guide

Read through the following statements, thinking about the poems you were given yesterday. Review or re-read the poems if necessary. After doing so, place a checkmark next to the statements you believe come closest to what the author is saying.

_____ In "Reply to a Northerner," the author is describing only one trait of Annam--that of loyalty to Chinese laws.

_____ Annam is a place of old customs and practices.

_____ The people of the South (Annam) lack the skills of great artisans and craftsmen.

_____ "Birth and old age, disease and death" is about the author's fundamental Buddhist beliefs.

_____ One who adheres to the laws of Buddha will live a life filled with wasted words.

_____ Through seeking Buddha and Dhyana, life is less dark and less painful.

_____ When one reads "Buddha's scriptures," according to Nguyen Binh Kheim, the heart is renewed and made wise or enlightened.

_____ The Thusness Way is a river passage in northern Vietnam.

_____ In "The people are like water," the author relates how Vietnamese have always been loyal to Chinese rule.

_____ The line "O kings, while safe on shore, beware the deep" refers to the possibility of peasant uprisings.

_____ The poem by Tran Te Xuong, "No thank you," is the author's way of paying homage and praising the French dominance in Vietnam.

_____ The author of "No thank you" rejects the system set up by the French, who killed his forbears as they sought to colonize Vietnam.

_____ The poem "Looking far ahead" is the author's premonition of violence and disorder that will wreck Vietnam, an apocalyptic end to Vietnam--all because certain peoples (the French and Portuguese) sought wealth and power at the expense of the Vietnamese.

_____ The author is predicting the coming of Haley's comet.

Group Discussion Questions for "Reality vs. Representation": Scenes from American movies about the Vietnam War[3]

Using the list of movies on videotape included in the bibliography, the teacher should view several of the recent American movies with the idea in mind of looking for specific scenes which are in all probability not a realistic portrayal of the Vietnamese people, their land, the war, or other relevant aspects. This will take some forethought and perhaps a day or two of editing time. But, if well chosen, the resulting video tape can be used repeatedly and will provided an interesting and necessary learning activity for students. Prior to viewing the video, students should receive the following handout information:

Since the end of the war in 1975, there have been numerous films about the Vietnam War and Americans in Vietnam. In most of these productions the Vietnamese people are shown only as villains, victims, or passive bystanders. You have just seen several scenes in which this may have been the case. Discuss the following questions and your reactions to the video with your group.

1. What impressions of the land and people did these scenes give you?

2. What differences have you noticed between the images of Vietnam in the video and what you have read in this unit?

3. What was distorted?

4. What was omitted?

5. Where there any stereotypes? If so, describe them and point out where such stereotypes are based upon falsehoods or ignorance.

6. How would you feel if Americans were portrayed in this way?

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[3] Adapted from activity "The Essence of Vietnam," in *The Lessons of the Vietnam War*, Teacher's Manual, p. 9-10.

Weekend Project:
Vietnamese Culture

For Monday, research an aspect of Vietnamese culture, using readings from the text and other sources--several are listed below and can be found in the school library, your local library, or in your teacher's library.

SUGGESTED TOPICS:

Vietnamese Language
Vietnamese Writing System
The Tale of Kieu
Geography of Vietnam (effects on culture)
Rice Cultivation
Cultural Influence from China
Confucian Examination system
Buddhism and Taoism in Vietnam
Red River Delta and Surrounding People
Mekong River Delta and Surrounding People
Family Structure/Family Life in Vietnam

These topics may be presented in many ways. You may present your topic in any of the following forms:

(a) a one-page, typed report
(b) oral presentation (3 minutes)
(c) photo-collage/drawing
(d) a short skit (3-5 minutes; no more than 3 people to skit)
(e) mixed media (combination)

SUGGESTED SOURCES: (of course, you may use other sources!)

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Timeline: Vietnam 1954-1973

1954		Defeat of French at Dien Bien Phu; Geneva Accords
1956		Proposed elections *not* held
1960		NLF formed in south
1961		Johnson to Saigon
1963		Diem assassinated
		JFK assassinated
1964		Gulf of Tonkin Resolution
1965:	Feb	Bombings of north
	Mar	Marines land at Danang
	Jul	Increased draft calls
1966:	Jun	Extensive bombing raids near Hanoi
1967:	Sep	Thieu/Ky elected
	Nov	McNamara (secretly) recommends termination of the bombing of North Vietnam
1968:	Jan	Beginning of the siege of Khe Sanh; TET offensive begins
	Feb	General Westmoreland requests 206,000 additional troops
	Mar	Westmoreland leaves Vietnam; Partial bombing halt declared; LBJ announces he will run for re-election
		My Lai massacre by U.S. troops
	Apr	Preliminary peace talks begin
	Oct	Full bombing halt; Paris talks to begin
	Nov	Richard Nixon elected President

1969	President Nixon claims "precipitate withdrawal" would be disaster
	Provisional Revolutionary Government formed in South Vietnam
	Ho Chi Minh dies (September)
1970	Prince Norodom Sihanouk deposed in Cambodia
	President Nixon announces U.S. invasion od Cambodia
	Gulf of Tonkin Resolution repealed
	Cooper-Church Amendment in U.S. Congress limits Presidential action in Cambodia
	South Vietnamese forces invade Laos
	President Nixon announces residual force of U.S. troops will stay in Vietnam
1972	National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger announces "peace is at hand"
	"Christmas bombing" of Hanoi and Haiphong, hitting numerous civilian targets
1973	U.S./D.R.V. talks end
	Last U.S. combat soldiers leave Vietnam

Role Play Activity:
The Roots of U.S. Involvement[4]

Students will act-out the first critical decision which confronted the Truman Administration in the time around 1946: whether to support Ho Chi Minh's appeal for U.S. moral support for Vietnamese independence or France's appeal for U.S. military assistance to regain control of its former colony.

1. Show the first 15-20 minutes of "Roots of a War," from the series by PBS, *Vietnam, A Television History;* this will give a brief overview of Vietnam's history up to the year 1946.

2. Have students get into two larger groups and one smaller group. The two larger groups will each be French and Vietminh delegations to President Truman. The smaller group will be the President's advisors. (The teacher will be President Truman.)

3. Give each group their handout (provided in *The Lessons of the Vietnam War*, Teacher's Manual)--at least one day in advance to save time. Have each group prepare a presentation to the President that will persuade him to give them the support they need. They should review the "five P's" (Power, Prestige, Principles, Profit, and Protection) and make their presentations in such a way as to appeal to U.S. interests. They should choose a group spokesperson.

4. Each group will first make their presentations to the President in a joint meeting and then separately in a private meeting.

5. Final Debriefing Questions (to be asked after presentations):

   (a) What were the arguments made by the French as relate to the five P's?

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[4] Adapted from an activity devised by William Bigelow, Jefferson High School, Portland, Oregon. In *The Lessons of the Vietnam War*. Teacher's Manual, pp. 11-12.

(c) If you were President Truman, with what U.S. interest would you be most concerned?

(d) Which arguments did you find most appealing in terms of U.S. national interests?

(e) Which arguments did you find most morally compelling?

(f) Did such a meeting ever take place? If not, why not?

Finally, the teacher should emphasize that the European desk prevailed over the Far Eastern desk of the U.S. State Department in this controversy, that this was because of the greater importance of Europe to U.S. national interests, but that such interest did not dictate U.S. military assistance to France's efforts to re-colonize Vietnam. The U.S. was in a position to influence French policy but chose to go along with its imperial ambitions. Why? Close with a discussion of the pervasive influence of anti-communist Cold War thinking on U.S. policy-making during this period.

Student Handout: THE SOUTHEAST ASIA RESOLUTION

(Also known as the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution)

Joint Resolution

To promote the maintenance
of peace and security in Southeast Asia.
PUBLIC LAW 88-408

Whereas naval units of the Communist regime in Vietnam, in violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law, have deliberately and repeatedly attacked United States naval vessels lawfully present in international waters, and have thereby created a serious threat to international peace; and

Whereas these attacks are part of a deliberate and systematic campaign of aggression that the Communist regime in North Vietnam has been waging against its neighbors and the nations joined with them in the collective defense of their freedom; and

Whereas the United States is assisting the peoples of Southeast Asia to protect their freedom and has no territorial, military or political ambitions in that area, but desires only that these peoples should be left in peace to work out their destinies in their own way: Now, therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Congress approves and supports the determination of the President, as Commander in Chief, to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression.

Section 2.

The United States regards as vital to its national interest and to world peace the maintenance of international peace and security in Southeast Asia. Consonant with the Constitution of the United states and the Charter of the United Nations and in accordance with its obligations under the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, the United States is, therefore, prepared, as the president determines, to take all necessary steps, including the use of armed force, to assist any member or protocol state of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty requesting assistance in defense of its freedom.

Section 3.

This resolution shall expire when the President shall determine that the peace and security of the area is reasonably assured by international conditions created by action of the United Nations or otherwise, except that it may be terminated earlier by concurrent resolution of the Congress.

Group Activity:
The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution[5]

1. Students should be given a copy of the resolution (provided in this unit) at least a day before the activity, along with the following suggested discussion questions. Students should keep in mind the assigned readings, especially the section in unit 2 of *The Lessons of the Vietnam War* dealing with the immediate events in the Gulf on Tonkin during those days prior to the resolutions passage.

   (a) Why did President Johnson seek congressional support for his actions in Vietnam when Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy had not?

   (b) On August 7, the day the resolution was passed by the Senate, Senator Wayne Morse, rejecting the resolution, said: "...we are in effect giving the President of the United States warmaking powers in the absence of a declaration of war. I believe that to be a historic mistake." Explain this point of view.

   (c) For what other reasons did this resolution become so controversial?

   (d) In recent years, U.S. Presidents have committed military forces to fight in foreign countries without a formal declaration of war by Congress. What are the arguments for and against this change in governmental responsibilities? (Consider the constitutional, political and military implications.)

2. Provide a timeline of the events leading up to the resolution on the chalkboard or overhead projector. Ask students to make an assessment of the events in terms of what "actually" took place in the gulf, how the U.S. interpreted those events, and how the North Vietnamese interpreted those events.

3. If time permits, or on the following day, have students get into groups of about three or four students per group. Each group should discuss their responses to the above questions for about ten or fifteen minutes. Each student will then write a brief summary of the group's answers or conclusions to one of the questions.

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[5] Adapted from Mary Alexander's Document of the Month article: "Tonkin Gulf: A Study in Historical Interpretation," found in *Social Education.* May 1983: 349-51.

Illustrating the Wounds of War
In Class Activity[6]

Students will form six or seven groups. Each will create a poster which will be displayed either in the classroom or in some appropriate location in the school. Each group's poster will address the one of the following topics:

(1) Casualties
(2) Psychological Wounds
(3) Economic Costs
(4) Social and Political Costs
(5) Loss of U.S. Prestige in the World
(6) POW/MIA Issues
(7) Destruction of Vietnam.

Students should also adhere to the following criteria:

(a) Posters should accurately illustrate the specific cost of the Vietnam War that has been assigned to the group.

(b) The posters should capture the basic information in the reading, as well as the human dimension of the cost.

(c) The posters should exhibit some measure of creativity and must involve all group members in some form of its production.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Poster board or large sheets of paper, markers, crayons, colored pencils, water color paints, magazines such as *National Geographic* or newspaper clippings with appropriate photographs which can be cut out, rulers or other straight edge devices, scissors, and glue.

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[6] Adapted from a unit 10 activity outlined in *The Lessons of the Vietnam War.* See Teacher's Manual, p. 26.

Group Debates: Covert Wars

1. Students should form five groups. Each group will recieve a handout for each of the five points of view from debate about covert operations and the role of the CIA in U.S. foreign policy (from pages 17-19, unit 12, *The Lessons of the Vietnam War*):

Mortin Halperin (staff member of National Security Council during Nixon Administration):

> I believe that the U.S. ought not to engage in covert wars designed to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. The constitutional grounds for this position are clear. Covert operations commit the U.S. to major foreign policy initiatives--to wage war--without public debate, without congressional debate and without giving citizens the opportunity to express their views either by petitioningthe government or by voting against a president because they don't approve his policies.

Leslie Gelb (national security correspondant fot the *New York Times*):

> I disagree with Mr. Halperin's proposition that we ought not to interfere in the internal politics of other societies. I believe that is exactly what foreign policy is. All foreign policy is the extension of one's internal policies into the internal policies of another nation.
>
> I think the question is not, "Should you have covert operations?" The question is, "What is your policy?" If you have a policy that makes sense, it seems to me that in principle you could conduct covert operations supporting that policy...

Ralph W. McGehee (served 25 years in the CIA, including in Vietnam; author of *Deadly Deceits: My 25 Years in the CIA*):

> I believe that CIA covert operations have helped destroy democracy around the world. By means of these operations, the CIA has replaced popular governments with brutal, murderous, U.S.-controlled military dictatorships that torture and kill their own citizens. ...The disastrous Vietnam War began as a CIA covert operation.

William Colby (CIA Director, 1973-76; author of *Honorable Men: My life in the CIA*):

> I have quite a different view. Covert action is nothing new in American life. ...It is true that in the 1950's, with the organization and expansion of the CIA, there was a considerable upsurge in them. Of the covert operations undertaken since then, I would say that some have been very successful and some have been disasters, some have been the wrong thing to do and some have been the wise thing to do. ...The Bay of Pigs was certainly a disaster. But consider our program in the Congo in the early 1960's. The question we faced in the Congo was whether that country, which had just gained its independence from Belgium, would be run by some toadies of the old Belgian mining companies or by men aided by Che Guevara and supported by the Soviet Union. The Cia found a midpoint between those extremes--it helped Joseph mobutu, then a nationalist member of the Congolese forces, become the third alternative. Now, I concede that the Congo--or Zaire, as it is now called--is no garden spot and that Mr. Mobutu is not the most perfect man in the world. But I think that he has considerable advantages over the alternatives.

John Stockwell (former CIA case officer in Zaire and Vietnam):

> I grew up in the Congo and served there in the Marine Corps and as a CIA officer. i know the country very well, and I can say that the CIA intervention there was an unmitigated disaster. The U.S. subverted democracy in the Congo. We participatied in the assassination of a prime minister who was democratically elected, Patrice Lumumba. Then we installed in power Joseph Mobutu, who is still the dictator. We have run the country into a debt of $6.2 billion--money that was spent on the multinational corporations, not on the people. in the Congo today, 25 percent of the people are starving, while Joe Mobutu has a personal fortune of about $4.5 billion. That is the result of what the CIA considers a successful covert action.

2. Each group should pick a representative to read that group's portion of the debate, giving further reasons why they (the group) holds such a position.

3. After all groups have had an opportunity to read and offer rationales, they should begin to look at their portions of the debate for assumptions or assertions which cannot be reasonably

supported by the "facts" outlined in each argumant. Each group should respond to the following questions:

(a) What are the assumptions that your "expert" makes in his presentation?

(b) What are the overall "truths" which can be derived, if any, from this debate as a whole?

(c) In what other countries do you know of that the CIA has had covert operations? Why?

(d) In what countries might the CIA, as directed by the President, be interested in developing a covert operation? Why?

(e) What do you and the members of your group believe should be the nature of the CIA in U.S. foreign policy? Why?

4. Ecourage students to watch for articles in the newspaper or television news stories about current CIA activities. After a period of a few months, ask the students if such stories were easy to find. If they were not, why? For longer course units on Vietnam or other foreign relations studies, this activity could be extended with research on the recent U.S. relations in Latin America and Africa, especially El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, Chile, Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, and Liberia, to name a few.

The Vietnam War
Final Reaction Guide

Directions: For the last four weeks, you have been reading and studying about the causes and effects of the Vietnam War, as well as reasons given by U.S. officials for involvement in Vietnam. Now that we have studied that period of U.S. history, it would be beneficial to reflect upon and re-examine your beliefs and opinions about war. For each statement, put a check mark along the continuum to indicate the extent to which you "agree" or "disagree."

Strongly agree	Strongly disagree	
_____	1.	A nation must protect the property of its people, even if war is necessary.
_____	2.	If a country expects to be attacked by a foreign power, it is justified in attacking that power first in its own defense.
_____	3.	Only when a nation is invaded does it have the right to go to war.
_____	4.	The government of the U.S. must defend American-owned businesses in foreign countries.
_____	5.	Even though some Americans may oppose war with another country, once war is declared each person should give the government his or her full support.
_____	6.	When two countries are at war, there should be no distinction between the civilian population and the military.
_____	7.	There are situations facing a nation where war is the only alternative.
_____	8.	A nation has the right to resort to war to obtain the natural resources it lacks and needs for its well-being.
_____	9.	When called upon to approve a declaration of war, a Congressman should decide the matter according to the wishes of his or her constituents.
_____	10.	During time of war, a person should put his country ahead of his or her personal beliefs.

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INTERVIEWS

Newett, Pat. Secondary history teacher. St. Joseph's Academy, 2307 S. Lindbergh, St. Louis, MO. 314-965-7205. Mrs. Newett teaches a full semester course titled "Vietnam and Watergate."

ST. LOUIS COMMUNITY RESOURCES[7]

1. Vietnam Veteran's Leadership Program
724 N. Union, St Louis, MO 63108. 314-367-5505

A non-profit organization, the Leadership Program has a staff of four (three Vietnam War combat veterans) who work to find job placements for veterans of the Vietnam War. Staff members are available to speak about Vietnam veteran's issues and problems, including post-traumatic stress disorder, agent orange and minority issues. (An honorarium is not required.) The VVLP also has a library of audiovisual materials on topic related to the war. Though some of its services focus on the particular needs of Vietnam veterans, the VVLP provides services for all veterans that include assistance with starting small businesses, a homeless veterans program and up-to-date information on veterans benefits.

2. Vet Center
2345 Pine, St. Louis, MO 63103. 314-231-1260

A branch of the Veterans Administration, the Vet Center provides psychological counseling for Vietnam veterans and their families. Vet Center counselors can make presentations about veteran's issues and problems and have particular expertise on post-traumatic stress disorder. The Center maintains an audiovisual library including 3/4" videotapes. Those counselors who served in the Vietnam War can also speak about the historical background of the war and their personal experiences in Vietnam. The political views of the counselors vary and represent personal opinion, not the official position of the Vet Center, which is an a-political organization.

3. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
438 N. Skinker, St. Louis, MO 63130

Members of the Women's International League who were active in the anti-war movement in St. Louis are available to speak to high school classes about the local peace movement and their role in it, including draft counseling for conscientious objectors. The presentations would not be academic lectures but rather accounts of personal experiences.

4. Richard ("Radio Rich") Dalton-KSHE Radio Disc Jockey
700 St. Louis Union Station, St. Louis, MO 63103. 314-621-0095

Rich Dalton, who has worked in radio broadcasting since 1968, is available to make informal presentations (at no charge) on music and media of the Vietnam War era. He plays music of the period and discusses its

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[7] From Katherine Cochrane, *Selected Resources for Teaching About the Vietnam War*. 1987. Center for International Studies, University of Missouri-St. Louis.

relationship to public opinion about the war. He also discusses the impact of the media on public opinion about the war. The presentation is an informal one, and Dalton solicits a good deal of student participation in the discussion.

5. International Institute of Metropolitan St. Louis
   3800 Park Ave., St. Louis, MO 63110. 314-773-9090

   The Institute has been the most important local organization in the resettlement of refugees from Vietnam and other countries of Southeast Asia. The Institute will arrange for native Vietnamese to visit local classrooms and make presentations on the culture of Vietnam. In some cases, schools may need to provide transportation for the speakers. For a $5.00 fee. schools may rent the 30-minute videotape "Silk Sarongs and City Streets," a documentary that depicts how the St. Louis Lao community is using dance as a means of maintaining its cultural traditions while adapting to life in St. louis. Produced by the International Institute, the video is an excellent classroom resource for teaching about the experience of post-Vietnam War refugees from Southeast Asia and the subject of cross-cultural assimilation. Contact Ann Pearson, Cultural Anthropologist at the Institute.

6. Center for International Studies, University of Missouri-St. Louis
   8001 Natural Bridge Rd, St. Louis, MO 63121-4499. 314-553-5801

   The Center for International Studies is a resource center for Missouri educators teaching in the field of international relations and conflict. Their International Resources Collection is a library of teaching materials which may be borrowed by Missouri educators through the mail, free of cost. Consultations may also be set up to help educators plan instruction and view the International Resource Collection. Contact Katherine Cochrane, Assistant Director of Community Education.